

Brookline Department of Public Health
Hot Weather Tips
617-730-2295

Tips for Preventing Heat Related Illnesses:

- NEVER leave children or pets alone in a closed, parked vehicle.
- Slow down, avoid strenuous activity.
- Avoid too much sun.
- Plan outdoor games and activities for early morning or evening.
- Avoid extreme temperature changes.
- Stay indoors as much as possible and use air conditioners to cool the air. When the temperature is in the high 90's, fans will not prevent heat related illness. Taking a cool shower or bath is a better way to cool off.
- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing that will cover as much skin as possible.
- Protect face and head by wearing a wide brimmed hat.
- Drink plenty of fluids, even if you do not feel thirsty, and avoid alcoholic beverages, drinks with caffeine and large amounts of sugar—these actually cause you to lose more body fluid.
- Use your stove less and try to cook your meals in the cooler part of the day.
- Although any one at any time can suffer from heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others. Check regularly on:
 - Infants and young children
 - People aged 65 or older
 - People who have a mental illness
 - Those who are physically ill, especially with heart disease or high blood pressure
- Visit adults at risk at least twice a day and closely watch them for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Infants and young children, of course, need much more frequent watching.
- KEEP COOL—Spend as much time as you can in cooler surroundings.

Hot Weather Health Emergencies:

Heat cramps:

Painful spasms, mostly in legs and abdomen, usually the result of heavy exertion and heavy sweating.

Recognizing Heat Cramps

Painful spasms usually in the legs and abdominal muscles that may occur in association with strenuous activity.

What to do

Apply firm pressure to cramping muscles or gently massage to relieve spasms. Replace fluids. Consult your health care provider.

Heat exhaustion:

Typically occurs when people exercise heavily or work in a hot, humid place where body fluids are lost through heavy sweating.

Recognizing Heat Exhaustion

Heavy sweating, weakness, cold, pale and clammy skin. Weak pulse. Fainting and vomiting possible.

What to do

Lie down in a cool place. Loosen clothing. Apply cool wet cloths. Fan or move person to air-conditioned place. Take sips of water. Consult your health care provider.

Heat stroke:

A medical emergency- the body's temperature control system, which produces sweating to cool the body, stops working. Sunstroke: Another term for heat stroke.

Recognizing Heat Stroke

High body temperature (106+). Hot, dry skin. Rapid, strong pulse. Possible unconsciousness. Individual will likely not sweat.

What to do

Heat stroke is a severe medical emergency. Call 911 or emergency medical services or get the person to a hospital immediately. Move to a cooler environment. Try a cool bath or sponging to reduce body temperature. Use fans and/or air conditioners, to cool the body. DO NOT GIVE FLUIDS.

Resources: Massachusetts Department of Public Health
US Centers for Disease Control